

*job evaluation system**2a.1*

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THE SYSTEM

(#2 of NSA submission)

We adopted a point rating method for the evaluation of Agency General Schedule jobs because this method provides a comparatively objective, analytical, and quantitative basis for making grade determinations.

Specifically, the method offers these advantages:

1. It can be developed in a reasonable time at a reasonable cost.
2. It can be easily understood and uniformly applied by the users with a reasonable amount of indoctrination and training.
3. It will, with proper application, result in reasonable consistency and uniformity in the evaluation of General Schedule jobs.
4. It will result in grade determinations which are compatible with decisions which would be obtained by the application of Office of Personnel Management grade level standards for jobs having corresponding duties and responsibilities.

Job evaluation cannot be reduced to the type of precise measurement which is characteristic of the physical sciences. It is, however, a measuring process and similar principles apply to any measuring process. To measure the relative lengths of six wooden planks, for example, we need units of measurement (i.e., feet and inches) and a tool for applying the measuring unit to each plank being measured (i.e., a yardstick).

The NSA Point Rating System is based upon these same basic principles of measurement. It is founded on the premises that:

1. Determination of the relative difficulty and responsibility of jobs is a measuring process;
2. Any process of measurement requires the use of measuring units;
3. In job evaluation the units of measurement must be those characteristics, elements, or factors which all jobs to be measured have in common;
4. These measuring units, or factors, must have definite and stable values; and

5. Gradations in the degree of factors should be measurable by a quantitative method.

In developing the NSA System, key job factors, which apply to all jobs covered by the system, were selected and defined. Recognizable degrees for each factor were isolated and defined. The degrees for each factor were placed in a logical array on a graduated rating scale for each factor. The unevaluated job is compared with definitions which are written for the various recognizable degrees of each factor. Each definition of a degree of a factor is a standard which tells what the characteristics of a job must be for it to be credited with the point value assigned to that degree of the factor. This determination of intermediate values in numerical terms permits a more positive expression of grade level than is possible with a qualitative method such as that prescribed by the OPM.

The point rating evaluation pattern is applicable to all types of jobs since it is the key aspects of the job (or factors) which are being evaluated. The system has the following characteristics:

1. It is easier and less costly to install and maintain since it does not require the development of specific grade level standards for each separate occupational specialty.

2. It is objective because it permits classifiers to consider the same factors in the same way each time they evaluate a job, thus providing more consistent grade level results and greater uniformity of treatment from one job to another and from one occupational specialty to another.

3. Because of its analytic design, it is easy to apply, assures that all pertinent factors will be considered, facilitates the exchange of information about evaluation results, and serves as a good medium of instruction for inexperienced classifiers.

The NSA Point Rating System is in accord with the grade structure prescribed by Congress. The evaluation pattern and grade conversion table were purposely constructed so that the results of their use would not be unlike those obtained by application of OPM grade level standards to jobs having corresponding levels of difficulty and responsibility.

Any job evaluation system is only as good as its practitioners. The point rating method is an aid to but not a substitution for judgment. In the final analysis, determining the grade of a job is still a matter of individual judgment. Understanding and acceptance of the system on the part of all its users is essential to its success.